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become two centuries later a great fief of the crown." It is hardly necessary to say that this theory is in direct opposition to the reigning explanation of the facts, so ably presented by M. Ferdinand Lot in his *Fidèles ou Vassaux*, and the difficulty of establishing it will be at once appreciated.

Two cardinal difficulties receive little attention from the author. If the feudal bond existed at the end of the ninth century between the Carolingian king and the regional dukes and counts, how did this connection disappear in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, to be renewed in the reign of Philip Augustus, so late in the history of the formation of the feudal system? If the feudal bond existed in its most characteristic features between the regional great baron and his vassals in his county or duchy, why should it not exist between the great baron and the king, and why should not terms, implying a technical significance, have the same meaning when applied to one relationship as to the other? A specific instance of the author's interpretation of terms may illustrate at once the second question and the author's method of treating his evidence, of which it is too characteristic. On page 137 in note 1, he cites the passage: *Willelmus princeps Nordmannorum eidem regi se committit*, having just before denied in the text that the duke of Normandy did homage to the king, and on page 159 he says: "Far from having found the least proof that the duke of Normandy did homage to the king"; but on page 145 he says that the same chronicler, Flodoard, "tells us expressly that a part of the Norman barons did homage, some to the king, Louis d Outremer, others to Hugh the Great". but the only proof he gives is this passage quoted in the note: *Quidem principes ipsius [Willelmi] se regi committunt, quidem vero Hugoni duci*. Identically the same expression is proof of homage in one case and not the least proof in the other. The volume is full of interest and suggestion to students of the period, though hardly the equal in these respects to those that have preceded it.

G. B. ADAMS.

*The Beginnings of Modern Europe (1250-1450)*. By EPHRAIM EMERTON, Ph.D., Professor of History in Harvard University. (Boston: Ginn and Company. 1917. Pp. xi, 550. \$1.80.)

THIRTY years ago Professor Emerton wrote his *Introduction to the Middle Ages (375-814)*, which has furnished many generations of pupils in high schools and colleges a pleasant introduction to medieval history. In 1894 this was followed by his *Mediaeval Europe (814-1300)*. The present volume continues the series by bringing the general history of Europe down to about 1450. On many pages the date 1450 is exceeded so far that 1500 would have served as well as 1450 on the title-page. In format, print, and binding, the new volume is identical with the *Mediaeval Europe*, but whereas that and the *Introduction* were supplied with

bibliographical aids for students and teachers, this new volume has no such useful accessories and seems to be addressed to the general reader as much as to students and teachers. It would seem that the author, who in his *Introduction* began to write for youths of fifteen, has, in his successive books, kept in mind those same youths of 1888 who have now advanced to middle life.

Professor Emerton has rendered an extremely valuable service in writing this book, and in writing it so well. Amid a host of special books, the general history of this period has been sadly neglected. Thus far we have had nothing except the third volume of the *Histoire Générale*, edited by E. Lavissee and A. Rambaud, J. Loserth, *Geschichte des späteren Mittelalters* (1197-1492), and R. Lodge, *The Close of the Middle Ages* (1273-1494), of which Eleanor C. Lodge, *The End of the Middle Age* (1273-1453), is practically an abridgment. Very few have the ability and persistence necessary to read the French or the German, and for some reason or other American students do not relish Lodge's book. The simple truth of the matter is that the general history of this period has hitherto been read very little in this country. Professor Emerton has now supplied a long-felt want and his book will be welcomed in many places.

Everybody admits that the period from 1250 to 1450 is an extremely difficult one on account of its complexity. The present author has simplified matters by avoiding irrelevant details, and by grouping all his material in but ten chapters with such interesting headings as the Principle of the Modern State, the Rise of a Middle Class, the Age of the Despots in Italy. Much, at times too much, has been sacrificed to simplicity and coherence. Thus the Black Death, with its strong human appeal and with its far-reaching social and economic results, is scarcely mentioned; Spain is left out entirely; and the important history of eastern Europe, culminating in the fall of Constantinople in 1453, is not treated adequately.

The most striking feature of the book is its title. The author evidently persists in restricting the term medieval to the period from about A.D. 800 to about A.D. 1300. We have little quarrel with that. It is idle to insist upon a correct definition of such a peculiar word as medieval which has never had any definite meaning. Some bold text-book writers have even gone so far as to eliminate it altogether by extending ancient history to 800 A.D. and beginning modern history at that same date. Mere words and definitions aside, the important point is that Professor Emerton still holds firmly to the orthodox belief, popularized especially by Burckhardt, Voigt, and Symonds, that the so-called modern spirit originated in the individualism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which is usually called the Renaissance, and that the medieval period had little or nothing to do with the shaping of modern life. Readers of chapter IX., the Renaissance in Italy, are likely to get the impression that the stirring life of the twelfth and thirteenth cen-

turies was as meaningless for modern times as the back-woods life of western Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries. Professor Emerton unfortunately does not acquaint his readers with the fact that a reaction has set in against Burckhardt and that to-day the opinion is fairly widespread that in the shaping of modern life the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had as much if not more influence than the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

L. J. PAETOW.

*Wessel Gansfort: Life and Writings.* By EDWARD WAITE MILLER, D.D., sometime Professor of Church History in Auburn Theological Seminary. *Principal Works*, translated by JARED WATERBURY SCUDDER, M.A., Professor of the Latin Language in the Albany Academy. In two volumes. [Papers of the American Society of Church History, special volume numbers I. and II.] (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1917. Pp. xvi, 333; v, 369. \$4.00.)

THIS biography of John Wessel fills an important gap in church history. It is especially useful, as there is very little about Wessel in the English language except a few chapters in Ullmann's *Reformers before the Reformation* and a few brief references in the general church histories. Moreover, Ullmann's style is heavy, but this work has the American fashion of going directly and clearly to the heart of the subject. The first volume is taken up with a careful and comprehensive sketch of Wessel's life, which is followed by brief notices of his letters and main works and finally by a translation of his letters. The second volume contains a translation of his two main works, "The Sacrament of the Eucharist" and "The Farrago", to which is added a translation of the main sources of his life by Hardenberg and Geldenhaur. Brief critical notes on variations in the text and an index of persons and topics close the volume. The volumes contain a number of illustrations, as a portrait of Wessel Gansfort, the Gansfort coat-of-arms and views of Groningen, together with some of the title pages of his works. The translation is carefully done and is especially valuable because hitherto none of his works were accessible in English.

The special significance of Wessel over against the other "Reformers before the Reformation" might have been considered more fully, although the author makes incidental references to Wycliffe, Huss, and Savonarola. But doubtless he found enough material directly connected with Wessel's life not to go far afield. The work, however, demonstrates the fact that Wessel was the mystic among the Pre-Reformers, and, if the conclusions of the author be accepted, he was a sort of Protestant Thomas a Kempis.

The relation of Wessel to the Reformers is more fully treated. The problem of his theological position—whether he was a Protestant or